

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 1870.

Subject: Borrowing Trouble.

# PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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Brooklyn, January, 1869.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

## PLYMOUTH PULPIT.

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### THE SUBJECTS OF VOL. III. ARE

- I. Watchfulness.
- II. Paul and Demetrius.
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- IV. Treasure that Cannot be Stolen.
- V. Bearing, but not Overborne.
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## BORROWING TROUBLE.

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"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."—MATT. VI. 34.

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From the nineteenth verse of this chapter to the thirty-fourth, we may find the theory of life as laid down by our Lord Jesus Christ. Every philosophy proposes to itself, or seeks, some such schedule or scheme of living; and every man has some idea of what is the way of happiness. Not only every philosophy, but every religion has it. Here we find the secular side of life, the earthly life, the chart for living in this world, contained between the nineteenth and the thirty-fourth verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew's Gospel.

"Do not live," says the Master, "for external things. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. After all these things do the gentiles seek—what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed; but let not my disciple, who accepts my ideal of life, and means to be happy according to the pattern that I shall lay down, make external and sensuous enjoyment the end and aim of his life."

It is not taught here that we are to pay no attention to external things. It is not a doctrine that lays the axe at the root of enterprise, or of commerce, or of secular industries. It does not say, "Be not engaged in any of these things." Men must needs be occupied with these things. But we are told, "Do not make these the things *for* which you live: make them the things *by* which you live."

If I go to see a brother, long absent, who has just landed in Boston, I go by the cars. I use them as a means of conveying me there. It is not merely for the sake of the car-ride that I go to Boston. The cars become instruments of convenience to me. My heart goes for a purpose disconnected from them. I am thankful for this mode of conveyance; but it is the means, and not the end.

And our Master says, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven—incorruptible treasures. Do not lay up evanescent, earthly treasures, but the abiding treasures of the heavenly state."

It is not a stroke at riches. It is not undervaluing worldly good, in its own place. It is substantially saying, "You are not beasts, that are born into life, and live only in this world; and therefore you ought to lay the foundation here for enjoyment in the future life. You are really children of God. You are to have a life so long, so noble, and so above all that is in the brute creation, that you should live for that other, interior and higher life, and not for the lower one. Make the higher life and the nobler development the aim; and make this secondary and secular life the mere instrument by which you attain that."

Here, then, is the grand aim. While the great mass of mankind live through the senses for the senses, and in the present for the present, exclusively, Christ says, "Do you live for the higher, the spiritual, and the eternal life. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness—seek ye *first* in the order of time, and *first* in intensity, the kingdom of God and his righteousness—and all these things shall be added unto you."

In this there is a profound philosophy. For that training by which a man *seeks first the kingdom of God*, is just the training which makes him, in the economic world, the most efficient, and the most sure of success. The less follows the greater.

Then he teaches us, as is already implied in the very statement which I have made, that the real treasure of this life is to be moral and social quality. That is to say, we are to seek our happiness, not by the things which we have around about us, but by what we have in us. It is what we *are* that is to make us happy, and not what we *have*.

I have seen Cremona violins, dusty, brown, black, split and splintered in fifty places, mended again and again, and as homely to the eye as anything can possibly be, and yet worth a thousand dollars apiece—not on account of what they are to look at, but on account of the capacity which they have of producing extraordinary musical sounds. It is their intrinsic quality of tone that makes them so valuable. And I have seen violins edged with silver, inlaid with gold, and covered all over with mother of pearl, and perfectly gorgeous to a baby's eyes, that had no quality or capacity for producing musical sounds, and that were well nigh worthless.

I have seen persons who have attempted to be happy by overlaying themselves with exterior adornments and pleasures, and who were like a violin without music in it, but with splendid stuff on the outside of it.

And so the genius of the Christian scheme says to every man, "Your happiness is to come from the essential quality of your nature, and not from what you put on yourselves." You may cover yourselves with pearls and jewels, you may heap up around about you silver and gold;



but you cannot be happy with these things if you have not the capacity of being happy in yourself. Happiness comes from the concords of a man's own nature, and not from outward circumstances. When a man is prepared to be happy, outward circumstances help him. Of course they furnish the material or occasion of his happiness; but the prime condition—that without which all other things fail—is that the dispositions in the man shall be set so that he shall be capable of being made happy.

I have thus said expansively that which is said in the most condensed, apothegmatic form in the New Testament—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness." "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"—not perishable things of this world, but higher qualities, Christian graces, inward experiences and dispositions, which in their very nature are joy-bearing here, and are immortal there. Let such be the end and aim of your life."

This mode of teaching is the more striking to us because the modern spirit, and the American spirit before all others, is the spirit of fore-looking enterprise, and is restless, and insatiable, and indomitable, and for the most part sensuous and external. You could not rebuke the whole temper and spirit of the times more than by the exposition of this scheme of happy living, as propounded in the gospel. Every man feels, in the very air, as it were, the impulse to build himself up into a power in life. Every boy is born *to be somebody*, in this country. His parents, among their first inculcations, instil this into him. "It is vulgar," they say, "to stay where you start." Everybody has a chance for everything, we are told. And it has become hackneyed, that every man's son may be President, or Chief Justice, or something else. Everybody has the liberty to do everything, it is said. And therefore everybody is a-whirling and a-whizzing from the very cradle after everything. There is nothing that is looked upon more contemptuously in this country than content. There is no man that commands so little respect as the man that is contented with his condition. You shall hear it said of a man, "He was born of poor parents, he has been poor all his life, he is going to be poor the rest of his days, he knows it, and he does not care. He has no spirit. To be sure, he sings all the time, and is happy all the time; but then, he is *nobody*. There is nowhere that the modern spirit is more shown in contrast with the truly Christian spirit, than in this land of life, and enterprise, and fever, and restless industry, where every man is pressing forward. And although theoretically we are all orthodox, although we are all right with the creed, we are wrong somewhere else. It is not in their creeds that men are generally erroneous. It is in their business, it is in their out-door and every-day life, that they fall into mistakes. Out of doors we are all sin-

ners alike, no matter what we believe. We are all pressing on for outward exaltation; for treasures that the eye can see and the hands can handle. We are all living for the omnipotent present, and seeking to make ourselves happy by banking and building up on every side. And when we come to call men's attention to the fevered state of mind which grows up under these intensive goadings of industry; when we come to say to them, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and as much of these things as you need shall be added to you," they say, "Yes, that probably is true, *in a sense*." But that is only an evasion. It is not true to them. They do not believe a word of it. When we preach to men, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal;" when we exhort them not to lay up their treasure in this world, where at the best it is evanescent, and where it is very it feeble to create happiness, but to lay it up in the world to come, where will be enduring, and where it will be to them a source of "joy unspeakable, and full of glory"; when we tell them to be rich toward God, to be rich beyond, to be rich in hope and faith and pure love—they do not understand that, or they do not believe in it if they do understand it.

The scale of living, too, is so much raised by the very power of Christianity to intensify the human mind, society has so developed, and civilization, which always goes from simplicity toward complexity, requires so much more to make a man the equal of his fellows, that no man can keep upon his level without a great deal of activity. That is not an evil, although it is oftentimes perverted into one. The world has become very much like a treadmill. Formerly the wheel revolved so slowly that men could keep step, the laziest of them; but the great world now whirls round so fast that a man must run or drag. And the consequence is that they who, at the start, are comparatively feeble, or lacking in power, in ingenuity, in enterprise, or in efficiency, find themselves obliged to bustle up their step, in order to keep along with the march of their fellows or their class in society.

We always measure ourselves by relative standards; and he is rich that is richer than somebody else; and he is strong that is stronger than somebody else; and he is good or pure that is better or purer than somebody else whose life is keyed to a certain elevated standard. And so men are crowding one another, and there is infinite rivalry between them on every side, because they are striving to reach their ideal. Some men say, "I want to heap up great riches." A great many others say, "I do not want to be very rich. All I want is to have a fair equality with my fellow men." But their fellow men live in a stage of society,



a civilization, so complicated, with so many and such various wants to be cared for, with a demand for so many "conveniences" (the most intolerable nuisances in human life are these same *conveniences*—conveniences that have to be watered and pruned; conveniences—that have to be dusted and cleaned; conveniences—that have to be packed and unpacked; conveniences—that become moth-eaten; conveniences—that run zigzag, and all sorts of ways; conveniences—that keep people busy all the time)—their fellow men live on so comprehensive a scale, that it is impossible to keep equal with them. And so it is with society at large. There is prevalent such an intensive spirit of enterprise, that men are placed under a continual pressure. The very wealth of society in the station where you are, puts you upon an immense amount of exterior industry and of necessity in order to take care of yourselves—and that, too, when you only mean to be at a fair level or a fair equality among men.

I do not undertake to say that this state is not better than a savage or barbaric state; but I do say that, all the more, because this higher state has its attendant temptations, we need to hear the cooling, calming declarations that, after all, our life does not stand in external things; that a man may be a *man*, and not be rich, nor powerful, nor surrounded by all the objects which we are seeking; that though he may have and be happy in them, yet if, in the providence of God, he is overruled, and misses them, he should not think that he cannot be happy without them; and that if in the poorest man on earth, in a pauper, the kingdom of God is rich, he has laid up treasures above, the reflection of which will make him light and bright even here on earth.

Against this tendency to absorb all the forces of life and society upon our material conditions, the Saviour sets up a totally different career and course. The indispensable physical things of life do not require excessive toil or anxiety. That is to say, "your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of these things." It is as if the Master had said, "The divine government is such that a man can eat, and drink, and be clothed, and have a reasonable amount of comfort in his household, without excessive toil and taxation." There are special exceptions to this; but this is the general rule, comprehensively stated, in regard to the races, and the nations of the earth. All that is necessary to take care of the body does not need to consume the whole of life's forces. If a man has sought first and chiefly the soul's treasure—goodness, kindness, gentleness, devoutness, cheerfulness, hope, faith and love—he will extract more joy from the poorest furniture and outfitting of life than otherwise he could get from the whole world. For excitement comes from our lower passions; but joy comes only from our sentiments. A man may by excessive taxation reap excessive exhilaration

and excitement: but no man can get joy except from those branches on which it grows—namely, the affections and the moral sentiments. The appetites and passions do not give joy. Fiery excitements come from them; but joy comes only from the higher and nobler developments.

Therefore, after this outline of the course of life, the idea of it, its method and instruments, the whole is summed up by the Saviour in this: "*Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*" "It is needless," he says, "that you should be bearing troubles; that you should be worrying over long plans ahead; that you should be wearing yourselves out with cares; that you should be subjected to all the suffering of possible evils in days to come. The true scheme of life, the highest wisdom in living, the hope of immortality, ought to dispossess the low and beggarly way in which men live. No man should allow himself to live from day to day under all that accumulation of care and burden which the future foretokens; and especially all the evils and mischiefs which fear and the morbid conditions of the mind forebode. No man has a right to import all these into a single day. But this is just what men are accustomed to do.

Each single and particular day is marked out by the providence of God, so to speak, that it may cut off the past and all its mischiefs, and that it may intercept and prevent all the possible mischiefs of the future. The question is, Have you grace given you to-day to lift the burdens of to-day? Have you grace given you to-day to be content with the condition of to-day? It matters not whether you have food for to-morrow, ordinarily speaking. There are exceptional cases, which I do not need to instance, as of voyagers on desolate islands, or men making preparation for long expeditions; but as men live ordinarily, it may be said that if a man can bear the load of to-day, the sorrows of to-day, the joys of to-day, that is all he need concern himself about.

I do not mean to be understood as saying that we do not need to lay our plans far ahead. For forelooking is not burdensome. It is no more burdensome to plan for the next year or the next month, than it is to plan for the next hour or the next minute. The use of your intelligence prophetically, as it were, along the line of cause and effect—that is not forbidden. Nor is it wrong for men, by faith or by hope, to look forward. That is pleasure-bearing. But to look forward or back in such a way as to bring unhappiness—that is disallowed. You have no right to do it. In each particular day you are to concentrate, and burden yourself with, only the troubles which belong to that day—that is, the troubles which spring from the circumstances of that day.

"But," says one, "the child may die to-morrow." Wait, then, till to-morrow, before you mourn the dying child. "But bankruptcy may



come to-morrow." Well, if to-day is the last day that you are not bankrupt, at least enjoy to-day. "But, how shall I provide for to-morrow?" The Master says, "Sufficient for to-day are the evils of to-day." Let the evils, let the sufferings, let the wear and tear of the care which belongs to each particular day, be enough.

Besides, there is a piece of humor in the reply. You will worry, you will fret, for to-morrow. "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" Or, in other words, how absurd it would be, to see a dwarf foaming, and worrying, and fretting, because he was only five feet high, and saying, "If I had been six feet I should have been an orator?" How absurd it would be for a short man to say, "If I were only as tall as ordinary men, I might have made my mark in the world; but I am this diminutive little imp, and I go tripping here and there just like a little whiffet, and nobody cares for me; and, oh! if I could only be taller, how much better I should be!" Our Master points to the absurdity of it; and no man can think of it without a smile of ridicule. If there is one thing that is more ridiculous than another, it is a man's trying to make himself taller by stretching upwards. Height is one of those things that a man before he is forty years old generally concludes to be content with. Men learn before they are very old, to take their features and their stature, and not attempt to change them. There are things that a man must carry along with him to the end of life. He cannot help himself. And our Saviour says, "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?" And why take anxious thought for the things of to-morrow? What odds will it make? Suppose you think ever so much, suppose you rasp your mind with fearful cares, will it make your case any better? Can you change to-morrow? Can you render inoperative the law of cause and effect? Can you by solicitous forelooking throw light into the shadow? Can you dissipate the lurking, or the supposed lurking evils, by a consideration of them? It is an impossible thing.

You are master of yourself to-day; but God gives you supremacy for only one day at a time. To-morrow is not your kingdom. Of to-morrow you have no scepter till to-morrow is to-day. No man owns anything until it has been converted into to-day. As fast as time is ours it is brought to us; and then we administer over it. And to-day I can say, "Can I get through to-day?" I never saw a man that could not get through a single day. That is a space that almost anybody can stride over. Almost everybody says, "I could get through to-day if I had reason to believe that to-morrow—" Oh! to-morrow does not exist to you. If you can bear your burden to-day, if you can carry your cross to-day, if you can endure your pain to-day, if you can

suffer the shame of to-day, if you can put down the fear of to-day, if you can find philosophy of contentment to-day, you will get along well enough. Take what comes to you to-day. To-morrow you have no business with. You steal if you touch to-morrow. It is God's. Every day has in it enough to keep every man occupied without concerning himself with the things which lie beyond.

When the pilot is steering on the Ohio river, he looks at the headlands miles beyond him, in order to know where he is; for he has been accustomed to judge of the twisting and torturous channel by certain of these headlands. And so a man may take headlands far down in the future to steer by, in order that he may be better enabled to run his keel in the channel that he is now in. By foresight we enable ourselves to get along better to-day; and by so much we have a right to look into the future. But all the foresight of a given day is only to be such as shall better fit us for the duties of that day. And when a man has got through with the waking hours of any single day, he has got through with his duty up to that point of time. Duties will begin again to-morrow; but all duties lapse and end with each sphere of active time given to man. You have enough work to occupy all your time to-day. And blessed be the man whose work drives him. Something must drive men; and if it is wholesome industry, they have no time for a thousand torments and temptations which they would otherwise have. And let him be thankful who has every day enough legitimate work to keep him busy.

A ship that has headway steers easy; but while it lies drifting in the tide you cannot steer it at all. It swings back and forth, and you have no control of it. First the stern is "on," then the bow, and then the broadside. And so it is with idle men. A man that has nothing to do is drifting and whirling around, and is liable to go on this mud-bank, or on that sand-shoal, or what not. He cannot manage himself. No man is so miserable as the man who is uncertain as to what he shall do. The French have invented a word—*ennui*—by which to describe the condition of such persons. We have not the word in the English language, but we have the *thing*—a good deal of it. The wretchedness which comes from a man's having nothing to do has deserved the invention of a phrase in language; and we borrowed it from the French.

I know what this thing is myself. I know that when I have a week or ten days in which I have nothing to do—nothing *special* to do—everything, and therefore nothing—no fixed plan—no pressure on every side—they are unhappy days. I am glad to get out of vacation into term-time again. I am glad to get back from the pasture into the harness again. I am glad to throw off the harness and go to grass; rest



in its place is appropriate and desirable: but work is also appropriate and desirable in its place. Work is not God's curse. Work is God's medicine. If it had not been for work when Adam and Eve were cast out of paradise, they would have died of their misery. Work comforted them. They tilled the earth; and in the sweat of their brow they ate their bread; and the sweat of their brow took off the fever that would have been in their blood and bones if it had not been for the work and the sweat. Every day ought to have enough work to occupy a man wholesomely. Every day has conflicts enough to fill up a man's whole time. If a man is trying to carry himself according to the spirit of true love, he has enough to occupy him every day. If a man is attempting to subordinate all his passions, he has work enough for every day. If a man is endeavoring to fulfill all the duties of life, he has enough to attend to every single day, without troubling himself about the duties of to-morrow. Every day has occupations of usefulness enough to keep a man busy all the while. A man's secular industry, his spiritual conflicts, and his life of benevolence, are ample contents with which to grace and fill up every day as it comes. And we ought not to meddle with to-morrow. You cannot do it without subtracting just so much from the fidelity of to-day. We have no strength to waste. The field is so large in any single day, that no man can perfectly till it; and why should he go over the bounds into the next field?

In God's economy, each day, well cared for, prepares for the next, as cause prepares for effect. Days are invisibly joined. You have, perhaps, jointed, anatomized, birds, or fishes, or animals. Did you ever play anatomy on your own action, to see what was the line of cause and effect all through one single day? Dissection requires the very nicest insight and judgment; but there is no such organization in matter and flesh as there is in that curious complication of cause and effect in things intellectual and social and moral, called human life. Each hour is the legitimate product of the hour which went before it. If this hour bulges like the arm joint, then the next hour is a socket into which it fits itself. And so one part articulates into another, each successive part being in some way logically connected with that which went before.

Now, if a man prepares for to-morrow by making to-day right, he can foresee what the effect will be. The next day will come up as the legitimate antithesis, or the legitimate consequence, of the right-lived day which prepared the way for it. And if a man, neglecting his duties to-day, thinks of what he will do to-morrow, the to-morrow which he thinks of will not come to pass. There will be a to-morrow, but it will be a different to-morrow from that which he anticipates. For each

to-morrow is the logical sequence of the right to-day, or the wrong to-day, as the case may be. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." He that can get through any single day wisely, will find that the next day will be more easy than to-day was.

No man can see what is to come after him. You burden your time, therefore, with unrealities. More than half the things that have made you unhappy, have had no existence.

If one is jaded, overworked, dyspeptic, it is a familiar symptom that when he wakes in the morning, all the world is clouded with gloom to him. When an overtaxed and overcerebrated man gets up in the morning, before his system has had time to carry itself up by excitement to its proper pitch, he is nobody, he thinks; he never was anybody, and he never will be anybody; nobody loves him; nobody ever did love him, and nobody ever will love him; he never did anything, and he never shall do anything; and he does not care. Everything he looks at has a *blue* side, as it is called. But by ten o'clock, what with a good breakfast, and what with the social activities of the meal, his nervous system becomes strained up, and he begins to get the full use of himself, and one cloud after another goes off, and about twelve o'clock he looks back and smiles at himself, and says, "I was a fool this morning. I can see it now, though I could not then. Everything I looked at was dismal. It was all unreal. It was purely imaginary—no it was not even imaginary: it was the result of a morbid imaginary state." And that which is true as judged by the previous hours of the day, is not true as judged by the subsequent hours of the day.

If one would only make statistics of his experience; if one would only keep a book, he would find that nine-tenths of the things which trouble and vex him are unreal, or else things which he ought not to have thought of, anyhow.

Why are you unhappy? "Well, here I am: I used to live in a brown-stone house, four stories high, with servants, equipage, and all that; and now I am brought down to this two-story house, with the plainest kind of carpets and furniture. All my circumstances in life are changed." Well, have you enough to eat and drink? Have you self-respect? Have you a sense of honor? Is life as beautiful as ever to you in all the developments which God has made in the heaven and on the earth. The flow of time; the procession of the seasons, the honor and respect of good men; the love that one bears to another under the same roof, and in the household—are all these great treasures given to you? Have you Christ, and God, and hope of immortality? What is the matter that you are so wretched to-day?

"Well, I feel my crown; I am the King's son; I have an eternal



inheritance ; but this I had in a two-story house, and I want it in a four-story house !” Ought not such miserable creatures as he—that is to say, nine-tenths of us—to be whipped and scourged for so far lowering themselves as to forget all the magnitudes of manhood ; all the essential verities of life ; all the elements which go to make honor, and self-respect, and the mutual love and sweet endearments of the household ; all the cheer on the pathway to the grave ; the triumph of dying ; the glory of the resurrection ; the immortality of blessedness beyond death, where no wave-stroke of care ever comes ? All these things are theirs professedly, and really, oftentimes ; and yet they are low-browed, and anxious, and wearied, and have no comfort at breakfast, and have no cheer at dinner, and are miserable at tea ; and they go discontented to bed, and get up discontented in the morning, and wear out their lives in fretting because they are not quite as prosperous as they want to be ; because A. is more prosperous than they are ; because they are not equal to B. ; because the whole alphabet is against them !

More than that, if this class of frets and worries which we allow to disturb our happiness be taken out of the way, look at the anticipated ones that would be worthy of troubling us, and see how almost invariably they are like bubbles which we ourselves blow, and which we cannot breathe in the presence of without blowing them out.

A friend of mine explained to me his cure of speculating in stocks. It will not hurt some of you to hear the story.

He felt perfectly certain of making money ; but he was held back by the influence of a dear friend—though rather impatiently. Having promised that he would not engage in speculation in stocks at all (that being out of his regular business), he thought he would do the next best thing—take a little book and see how it would come out. So every day when stocks were in the market, he would watch his chances, and now and then he would say to himself, “There is something to be made in that, sure ; and if I could, I would buy a hundred shares ;” and he would put down a hundred shares, with the price ; and when he had a chance to sell a certain number of shares to a good advantage, he would put them down ; and so he went on charging and crediting himself according as he would have dealt if he had been allowed to ; and at the end of four months he summed the whole up, and struck a balance, and found that he would have been bankrupt four times over if he had done what he wanted to do ! His dry brokerage, his book brokerage, satisfied him ; and he attended to his own business with more content afterwards.

Now, if you kept a little book, I think it would do you good. If you would keep a book, and every day put down the things that pes-

ter you, and see what becomes of them, it would be a benefit to you. You allow a thing to pester you, just as you allow a fly to settle on you and plague you; and you lose your temper (or rather, get it; for when men are surcharged with temper they are said to have lost it); and you justify yourselves for being thrown off your balance by causes which you do not trace out. But if you would see what it was that threw you off your balance before breakfast, and put it down in a little book, and follow it up, and follow it out, and ascertain what becomes of it, you would see what a fool you were in the matter.

If you would in your housekeeping keep a little book, not of expenses, but of experiences, in this regard, just to see what comes of your forebodings and unnecessary cares, I think you would find out, in respect to your real, every-day life, that nine parts in ten of all the things which you bring into to-day from to-morrow, and from next week, are superlative ignorances and superlative impertinences, and that they are unreal.

But men are so conceited that the thing which they think of, they think to be true. This looming scare; this annoyance; this dampening and drooping of affection; this bereavement; all these spectral things which the imagination so lightly takes up—he does not stop to day to see that they were all mistaken, but he goes over the same ground to-morrow, he takes up the same line, and allows himself to be scared here and there. And so cares, like mosquitoes, pester him. Each of them sucks a little speck of blood; but all of them nearly drain him dry.

Thus men wear themselves out by the attrition of little things not one of which is worthy of notice, but all of which together scour like emery.

We are to consider that God will give to every man who simply trusts with childlike faith in him, in his government, and in his presence, when trouble comes to a head, the grace and the strength that then shall be required.

I have known persons who anxiously foreboded their own death. "How," they said, "could I endure to die and leave this sweet band of children? I do not know what James would do if I were to leave him?" *James* usually is taken care of under such circumstances. "What would Mary do? It breaks my heart to think that I may die." Many a mother has sat with a slight cough, and with a little hectic color on her cheek, and studied as to how she could part with James or Mary and the little brothers and sisters. My friend, as long as you are alive and plump, it is not your duty to leave your dear ones. When you are called to leave those that are dear to you, it will be very easy for you to leave them.

In June, or July, or August, when the apple is green, you may go



out and tug at it, and it does not want to leave the bough, and it will not leave the bough. A multitude of strings tie it to the bough, and it says, "My business is to stick here till I am ripe." But by-and-by when it is ripe, all those juices which make the apple better, also prepare it to let go. And one after another of the fibres of the stem break, being no longer required to convey the juices from the bough to the fruit. And when, after this preparation, the time arrives for the apple to come off, down it drops so easy that it does not know what made it fall.

In the stillness of the night I have lain in my father's house in Litchfield, when it was so still that the silence ached in the ear, and have heard that sound, so joyful sound to the up-rising boy—the plumping down of the early bough-apple in the garden under my windows. It needed no wind, but only the difference of the weight of the dew at night, to pluck it off from the bough.

When the time comes for men to die, they die very easy, as a general rule. When your time to die comes, and you are to leave this world, do you suppose the Lord Jesus, who loves you better than you love yourself, has not arranged everything so that you will be willing to go? You want to feel willing now; but he does not want you to be willing. You want to be willing to leave your children when God wants you to stay with them and take care of them. You have the knowledge, the spirit of fidelity and the strength which qualify you for that work; and what are these but indications that your duty is to live and take care of them. This equipment is a sign and token that now, to-day, your duties are here; and it is right that at this time you should feel unwilling to die, though one year hence, or one month hence, you may feel, and it may be proper for you to feel willing to die.

And how absurd is this anticipating what is to come! When by and-by God leads you step by step, down to the trouble which you are thinking of, there will have been wrought such changes, and such preparations will have taken place, that it will not seem like a trouble.

According to my observation, there is nothing in the world which so rebukes forethought and anxiety as dying. I have seen the heads of the family go; I have seen the father and the mother go; "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." The taking the heads of families, is like the sowing of wheat. The seeds, being scattered, take root for themselves, and grow. And children, when thrown upon their own resources, take care of themselves. Partridges know how to do it on the mountain; and so do children in the household, and everywhere. God takes care of your children. He took care of them through you to-day. It may be that he will take care of them without you to-mor-

row. You may be a good mother, whose children do better with you than they would without you ; but I have seen children who did better after their mother was gone than they did before. At any rate, God will not forsake the children whose parents are called to leave them.

When the trouble comes, Christ will come with it. Never bear your cross till the cross is laid on your shoulder. Never cry about a trouble until God brings it to you, and puts it on you. Then you will find that with the troubles comes the preparation, so that they cease to be troubles.

Livingston, the traveler, describes, in one of his letters, his experience when he was struck down by a lion. It has been supposed that it must be a terrible experience to be in the clutches of a lion, and about to be destroyed ; but he testifies that, when he was set upon and borne down by a lion's spring, and seized in his jaws, and dragged by him, from the moment that he was struck by the lion's paw, all fear and all trouble left him. It was a dream of peace with him. His intellect remained, and he supposed that he was about to be killed ; but he seemed to be under a magnetic charm until sometime after he was rescued by the fidelity of one of his attendants, and the lion was driven off. He says that when he was in the clutches of the lion he was in a state of perfect peace. It seemed as though there was a provision by which, under the influence of magnetism, or mesmerism, or something of the sort, the suffering was taken away from the prey while it was in the jaws of the devourer.

And that which he found to be true in the case of a literal lion, thousands of men have felt in the moral kingdom. When the lion that they feared in the way set upon them, God either stopped his mouth, or rendered the stroke of his paw painless.

Our troubles are not once in a thousand times what we anticipate them to be. Many of those troubles which we are to bear, when the day comes, so far from being what we anticipated they would be, become positive sources of enjoyment. Oh ! that men would derive from their past experience some little wisdom in respect to their future ! We do this in our pecuniary affairs. If a man by a certain arrangement makes money once, he does not undertake the same operation again without remembering it, and making the same kind of a business turn, or, at any rate, acting upon the same principle. But in moral things we have the most wonderful experiences—experiences that are very deep, very sweet, very instructive, very profitable, going right to the very core of life itself ; but afterwards we come into the same exigency, and profit very little from the instruction.

How many troubles, my friends, you have been through ! And the Lord has sustained you in every one. Where are the troubles of last



year? Look back on them. How many were there? You cannot count them. You have only a vague idea of them. You may have passed through bankruptcy, or there may have been a death in your family; but aside from these you have no distinct recollection of the troubles that you have had within the past year. That brood of things which lowered the whole tone, the temperature, of your spirituality, and made those wrinkles on your brow—what became of them? Did they hinder you, or hurt you?

I used, when I was in the West, and traveled on horseback, to dread, all day long, the fords. I had a peculiar fear of fords, arising from an early experience in which I was twice swept away, and came near losing my life. Though I was courageous in most things, I dreaded fords, so dark and pokerish did they seem to me. In those mud-rivers of the West, one never knew when the ground might shift, nor what condition a certain ford would be in when he got to it. In going from place to place the thought of the fords I would have to cross was a perpetual torment to me. For instance, I would go through White river all right, and Blue river would be back of me; but there would be Eel river to come; and I could not get there till five or six o'clock in the afternoon; that was the worst ford (the one that is before is always the worst). At last I would come to it; and now I would brace myself up and go across; but instead of there being a raging, foaming torrent, such as I had imagined, the water would be so low that the horse would not go knee-deep in any place. And then I would be mad because it was not deep, after I had been fretting all day about it! When I came back on the other side, it would be no comfort to me that I had lately crossed with so little difficulty. "To be sure," I would say, "the ford was not deep then; but it may be now. How do I know but it has been raining there?" But when I would get to the ford again, I would find that it was no worse than it was before, and would laugh at myself. And I never got any wiser. I always was afraid of a ford.

Now, my friends, we, every one of us, have a ford somewhere that we are crossing every day; and we dread it and dread it until we get to it; and then we go over safely; but when we get on the other side we forget the lesson; and when we come back to it again we come with the same dread. We are not wise in the things which relate to our own happiness.

The backward look and application of this inspired teaching is also in point, and valid for our comfort and instruction.

Although men mostly borrow trouble from the future, there are a great many persons who bring in trouble from the past. Nothing is more common than to hear persons who have lost dear friends mourning the past.

One person says, "If I had known, I never would have taken that journey. My child never was well afterwards. And I might have known. I was cautioned by my neighbors."

Another says, "I ought not to have had that physician. I was told that if I employed him my child would never get well; and I did employ him. If I had taken the other doctor, I think I might have had my child with me now."

Another says, "The child dropped off between two o'clock and four, just when I was asleep, though I slept but ten minutes. It was wrong for me to go asleep at all. If I had been awake, doubtless I should have seen just the turn; and if I had stimulated the child just at the time when it began to run down, it probably would have rallied. But when I awoke it was too late, and the child sank, and sank, and died. If I could only——" *If, and if, and if!* These *ifs* are dragon's teeth to most men.

Now, did not you do all that you could? Did not you do the best that you knew how? Did not your heart prompt you to do everything in your power? Did not you bring all that God gave you to that hour? Even if you made a mistake, are we not permitted to make mistakes? All men make mistakes. I make many of them, and so do you. I do not understand all the laws of life, and you do not. And it is not surprising that this and that symptom were neglected. If we were omniscient and omnipotent, it would have been different. But we are finite, peccable creatures. And you did the best you could. Why not, therefore, shut up that chapter of experience, and let it go? Why mourn and carry heavy griefs on account of the troubles of the past? It is not wise. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

But time draws on. Let me say, in closing, that the grace which we need to enable us to avoid borrowing trouble from the past, and to avoid borrowing trouble from the future, is a divine grace. So are we fevered with life, so are we beset with a thousand provocations, so are we subject to the whims and caprices of the circle in which we live, so are we stimulated and excited by the very way in which life is organized, from which we cannot separate ourselves, and with which we are obliged to be in sympathy, that no man can be calm, contented, sweet-minded and triumphant in the present hour, unless he brings more than his own philosophy to bear.

A man said to me this last week, "When I go to bed at night, I say to myself, I have done the best I knew how all day, and I leave the rest with God." Brave man! That is the meaning of *Cast all your care upon the Lord, for he careth for you*. Lay your burdens upon him, and he will take care of all your mistakes, not only, but of all your wisdoms, and of your successes therein. His nature is benefi-



cent ; and Christ says, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Philosopher, you may cipher that out. He says that *not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's notice*. Physicist, fix that to suit yourself. I tell you, I am not going to live without a God, and a God that is better to me than I am to my children. He has called himself my Father, and he has told me to call him Father—and I will. He has told me that *everything is naked and open before him*. He has told me that he is bringing me up through trouble and suffering for eternal life and immortal glory, and I believe it. All that is generous and manly in me, and all that in me which has aspiration for dignity and honor, makes me believe that I am being conducted through this great and strange world by an all-guiding Father, for the sake of making me worthy to be his Son in the kingdom of his glory. And I will have the benefit of that belief. I will bring down my Father into each particular day, and say, "The providence of this day is thine. Manage it as thou wilt. I do not seek to pry behind the philosophy and find out how it is. Sufficient is it that I may cry and thou wilt hear. It is enough that I may cast my burden on thee, and that thou wilt take care of me." It is enough that the voices of thousands of witnesses in every age have risen up and said, "We have cast our burdens and cares on the Lord, and he has sustained us." It is the living testimony of the church universal, and it is the testimony of scores and hundreds in this church—of many a father and mother, and husband and wife, and brother and sister ; of many a professional man ; of many a man of business ; of many a mechanic ; of many a sea-faring man or day-laborer—that say, "In my rising up and in my lying down, in my going out and in my coming in, in all the exigencies of life, I have waited on the Lord, and he has succored me in the day of trouble." *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, is the promise ; and the application of the apostle is, *So that I may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*.

To disarm life thus of all unnecessary cares and fears—how blessed the task ! how sweet the prerogative ! How wise it is for a man to say, "My duties, my sorrows and my joys, for this day, are simply within the horizons of this day. I will take care of to-day faithfully. For, *sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof!*" How wise it is for a man so to live until the last and the ransoming day comes, when God shall lift us into that land which is without a cloud, and without a care, and without a sorrow, and when we shall see him as he is, and be like him !

Christian brethren, hold on a little while longer. Let God turn over the leaves of the book of life for you ; read contentedly what is written thereon, and do not seek to interline nor erase.

Let God manage my affairs for me. Let him bring me sorrow, or exemption from sorrow. Let him bring me care, or release from care. It is his heart that loves, and his heart that guides, and his heart that is preparing me for the kingdom of glory. It is enough for me that my Father is taking care of me. So I will sing in sorrow, and I shall find the light in darkness, and victory in defeat, and joy through life and in death, and glory beyond.

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### PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We thank thee, our Father, for all the greatness of that help which thou hast manifested, and which thou art willing to bestow. Thou hast set before us the door of opportunity. Thou hast in all our exigencies provided relief, and succored us in our wanderings. We are graciously restored by the Shepherd. We rejoice that we are safe, and that we are victorious, and that we shall yet appear in Zion and before God—though not by the merit of our own wisdom, and not because our strength is adequate, and not because we have the wisdom of goodness. We recognize our sinfulness, and the weakness that springs from it. We recognize our ignorance, which is itself a sin, in things pertaining to God and to duty, in the midst of that great light in which we have always dwelt. We recognize our helplessness. Although we were clothed with power adequate to all our needs, yet we have weakened ourselves; we have by disuse rendered that power no longer available. We are strong in single things; but for all the duties of life how feeble and how poor are we! It is because thou, O Lord, by thy providence and by thy grace, hast undertaken for us, that we are confident both of victory here and of salvation hereafter. It is the love which is like summer to our souls, it is the fidelity of the divine and infinite love, it is the wisdom unsearchable and past finding out, of our all-guiding God, that shall bring us safely through. And so our trust for ourselves is not in our wisdom nor in ourselves at all. By the grace of God we are what we are; and that same grace shall make us whatever we shall attain unto in all the blessedness of the coming world, where ignorance ceases; where knowledge begins; where all joy shall begin to spring from pure founts inexhaustible. There, in our renewed existence, we shall be made worthy by the faithfulness, the love, the kind and nourishing care, of him who gave himself for us, that he might ransom us, and present us without spot or blemish before God.

We rejoice in thy goodness, Lord Jesus. We are thy disciples. We follow thee too often afar off; yet we are thine, and we would be filled by no other name. We would be found among thy people. We would evermore trust thee. Thou art here our solace, our example, our inspiration. Thee we follow in the way of self-denial and in the way of suffering. We would follow, also, in the valley and the shadow of death, and fear no evil there, because thou art with us, and thy rod and thy staff comfort us. We rise beyond into the certainty of immortality through thy divine power; and so shall we not praise thee and worship thee? Shall we not put thy name above every other name, and glory in it?

We rejoice, O Lord our God, that thou hast taught so many the secret way of life; the hidden joy; that thou hast caused thy name to be known



unto them as it is not known unto others. And we pray that thou wilt nourish in every such one the divine and secret life of the soul's innermost experience. Grant that such may grow strong in hope, and in love, and in patience, and in all suffering. And grant that they may learn to rejoice in infirmity and in trouble, and to bear every day their cross cheerfully. Grant that they may by faith annihilate time, and see the heavenly life begun even to-day, and begin that song which in sweet and inspired strains we shall complete in the heavenly land.

If thy people are vehemently tempted, grant that they may be rescued from temptation, and that the tempter may be driven away. If any of them are sitting in the shaddow, bring light to them, and bring forth the day out of the twilight. If there be any hearts that are burdened with care, that cannot carry themselves happily, nor sing by reason of the troubles of the way. Oh! teach them how to cast away these troubles; how to gain victorious joy. Deign to remember them, and to sustain them by the grace of God in their souls.

We pray that the example of thy people may be such as to win men unto the Christian life. May they behold their sincerity, their uprightness, their gladness of heart, their exceeding great hope of the future. May they behold how thy people conquer the life that now is. May they behold them too, in sickness, conquering it, and in death triumphant. And so may the holy living and the holy dying of thy people be a perpetual lesson and gospel to those who are without.

We pray that thou wilt bless those to-day who are gathered together in thy churches. May they have communion with God. May thy servants that are appointed to teach them and comfort them, be themselves greatly comforted and instructed from on high. We pray that thou wilt make thy people everywhere more and more of one mind. May love prevail, and overcome reason, and overcome conscience, and subdue them both to its sway. May love conquer all things. And may men learn both to believe and speak the truth, in love, and in love to be just, and in love to discriminate, to smite in love, and to bind up in love, and so to be sons of God, who is Love.

We pray that thou wilt bless our land, and all lands. And spread intelligence abroad everywhere. Liberate the reason of men, and guide it by the divine Spirit. We pray that all machinations for the enthralment of the human understanding, for the ensnaring of men's consciences, may come to naught. Wilt thou overturn and overturn till He whose right it is shall come and reign, and all the earth see thy salvation.

We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech thee that thou wilt uphold us by thy promises, and by the trust that our hearts have in thee. To whom shall we go but unto thee? We will not plunge into the abyss of unbelief. We will not go into that dark and dreary land of skepticism. We will have our God. Our hearts crown thee. Thou art the necessity of our life. We rejoice that thou dost make us, and so make us that we must make thee again to our imagination.

And now Lord, we give into thy hand and care everything that is needful for our best estate. We accord to thee foresight and faithfulness and care-bearing love. Thou art the Father, and thou art the Mother. In thee are all those things which we divide and call by differing names. All loves go back to thee, and are unitized in thee. All carefulness, and all gentleness, and all generosity, and all tenderness, and all triumph of love are in

thee, and flow forth from thine administration in this world, and shall forever and forever. And our trust is not in ourselves. It is not in this, that we are able to endure what must come, and what we cannot be rid of. Our trust is in this, that the dear, sweet God loves us, and by perpetual ministrations is preparing us for the heavenly home. And so we endure; and so we rejoice even in trouble.

And now, Lord, we pray thee, accept our thanks for all the goodness of days that are past. And we pray that thou wilt accept the consecration which we make of the hours yet to come. Ours they are not yet; but we remit them to thee. We will not invade them. Grant that we may live every day, writing upon the threshold of all our labor and care, *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

And to thy name shall be the praise forever and ever. *Amen.*



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